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Foster Care Families and Agencies to Receive Training to Prevent Sex Trafficking of Children

More than 50 percent of the children in Los Angeles County who become victims of sex trafficking are in the child welfare system. On Tuesday, the Board of Supervisors took a step toward closing the training gap for foster parents and foster family agencies to spot signs of when a child is being trafficked.

Although county social workers have been trained to spot the signs that show vulnerable young people are being exploited by pimps and predators, foster families and foster agency officials are not routinely taught important skills such as how to prevent a child from being trafficked or recruited, catching the signs if they are trafficked and what do to rescue a child from a life of prostitution.

The Board asked the Department of Children and Family Services to draft a proposal to ensure that foster family agencies and group homes who care for DCFS-placed children train their staff and certified foster parents complete annual training to understand telltale signs and halt the cycle of abuse. DCFS Director Philip Browning told the board he supports training and education of foster families and the agencies.

"We will continue to advocate and move as far as we can to eradicate this problem," said Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, who co-authored the motion with Chairman Don Knabe. "It is a moral crisis with true consequences in the lives of these children. Enough is enough."

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